

Seminar on the Enlightenment

HIS 740
Fall 2012
UNC-G

Instructor: Dr. Cristina Bejan
E-mail: cabejan@uncg.edu
Office: MHRA 2117
Office Hours: Thursday 3.30 – 4.30 pm
Tuesday Evening Seminar: 6.30 – 9.20 pm

What was the Enlightenment? Through reading primary and secondary sources, the student will gain a fuller historical, cultural and philosophical understanding of the important European intellectual movement.

Books

Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, Princeton, 2009
Denis Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew and D'Alembert's Dream*.
Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vols. 1 & 2, *The Science of Freedom*,
Norton
J. W. von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.
David Hume, *Selected Essays*, Oxford University Press
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*.
Voltaire, *Candide*

Attendance, Assignments, and Grading

This course is a seminar, so its success depends on the informed participation of each member of the class. Students are expected to attend every session and to arrive prepared to contribute to the discussion. *Careful preparation of the reading in advance of discussion of the material in class is essential.* Anyone who does not attend or contribute on a regular basis will be considered not to have met the course requirements, which constitutes grounds for failing the course. If you are ill or have an emergency that prevents you from attending a class, please contact me (in advance, if possible).

The final grade for this class will be based on three elements: class participation (20%), 1 short essay written during the course of the semester, two dates to choose from, (30%), and the research paper (50%). Please note that in order to receive a high grade (B+ or better) for class participation, it is crucial not only to attend regularly, but also to contribute consistently and constructively to the common understanding of the texts. Additional texts may be assigned during the course of the semester.

Research Paper

Each member of the class will write a research paper of 5,000-5,500 words (about 20-22 pages) on a topic chosen in cooperation with the professor; primary source materials and secondary literature must both be used in preparing the paper.

Learning Goals for History Majors: Thinking in Time

History Graduates will be able to:

- 1. Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods. [Historical Comprehension]**
- 2. Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view. [Historical Analysis]**
- 3. Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]**
- 4. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]**

All students are expected to abide by the rules of the Academic Integrity Policy found in the UNCG Student Policy Handbook. Any failure to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy will be handled as outlined in the Handbook.

TECHNOLOGY RULES

All technological devices (e.g. computers, cellphones) are banned during classtime. No exceptions.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week 1

August 21

Introductory: Ancients and Moderns

Reading: Pascal, Preface to *Treatise on the Vacuum*

(To be read before the first class!)

Week 2

August 28

The Republic of Letters and the Mind of the Enlightenment

Reading: Gay, Vol II. chapter 2 and Cassirer, chapter I

Immanuel Kant essay "What is Enlightenment?" (Blackboard)

Weeks 3 & 4

September 4

Nature and Natural Science

September 11	Reading: Gay, vol. 2, chapter 3, section 1, Cassirer, chapter II, Voltaire, selections from <i>Philosophical Letters</i> , and Diderot, <i>D'Alembert's Dream</i>
Weeks 5 & 6 September 18 September 25	<i>Religion</i> Reading: Cassirer, chapter IV, Gay, vol. 1 chapter 7, section 3, Gay, vol. 2, chapter 3, sections 2-3 and chapter 8, section 1 and Hume, <i>Selected Essays</i> , TBA, and Lessing, <i>Nathan the Wise</i> Short Essay due Sept. 25
Week 7 October 2	<i>The Science of Man</i> Reading: Gay, vol. 2, chapter 4, Cassirer, chapter II, Descartes "Letter of the Author" and System of Human Knowledge from the Encyclopedia of Diderot and D'Alembert
Week 8 October 9	<i>Changing the Common Way of Thinking: The Encyclopedia</i> Reading: Articles from <i>The Encyclopedia</i> , The article "Encyclopedia" and other articles from the <i>Encyclopedia</i> of Diderot and D'Alembert available online at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/
FALL BREAK	
Week 9 October 23	<i>Voltaire: The Epicurean as Stoic</i> Reading: Voltaire, <i>Candide</i> and Gay, vol. 1, chapter 3, section 4 and vol. 2, chapter 3, section 3
Weeks 10 & 11 October 30 November 6	<i>Law, Society, and the State</i> Reading: Cassirer, chapter VI, Gay, vol 2, chapters 7 and 9, Hume, <i>Selected Essays</i> , TBA, Rousseau, <i>The Social Contract</i> and <i>Discourse on the Origin of Inequality</i> Short Essay due Nov. 6.
Weeks 12 & 13 November 13 November 20	<i>Fundamental Problems of Aesthetics</i> Reading: Cassirer, chapter VII, sections i-iii, Gay, vol 2, chapter 6, Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste" and Diderot, <i>Rameau's Nephew</i>
Week 14 November 27	<i>Sincerity and Authenticity</i> Reading: Goethe, <i>The Sorrows of Young Werther</i>

Finale: What was Enlightenment?

Week 15

December 4

Reading Day

Week 16

Tuesday, December 11, 7 – 10 pm Final Examinations – Final Research Paper due